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Hopkins by
John M'Laughlin.

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A WORD

WITH

BISHOP HOPKINS.

BY

JOHN M'LAUGHLIN.

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JOHN W. HOPKINS,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF VERMONT.

Rev. and Dear Sir:—I have read an article from your pen published in the *Ledger* of the 9th Oct., not with any amazement whatever. From what I had seen from your pen in defence of slavery, I had come to the conclusion that you were not a very bright genius, and but a very poor controversialist. Your defence of slavery from the Bible is too silly for me to notice. Any one acquainted with the argument for and against slavery must notice that it is only a rehash of old arguments that have been ably answered long since; and the morality of the Bible has been triumphantly vindicated as far superior even to that of a *Bishop*. Another reason that I would not notice your Bible defence of slavery is, that I have a great respect for old institutions, especially in their dotage. Believing that dotage can do no real harm, why should it not be permitted to depart in peace? The ignorance of the past age has been shouting that the earth stood still and the sun went round: intelligence knew better, and bore it patiently, and if the barbarism of the present age goes down howling that slavery is right and just, and that the Bible says so, we know it to be otherwise. The day is ours; we can laugh and bear it; but, Sir, your article of the 9th inst, is such an expose of your principles, or rather the utter want of principle on the subject that it has tempted me to reply to it—not so much a reply as an advice, and to show you your inconsistencies—and I hope even a Bishop will not be unteachable, though the teaching may come from a layman. Sir, you feel sore under the charge of sympathizing with Rebellion, which Bishop Potter brings against you. I think the more of you for it. I

have some hopes of you yet. Your defence is, that your letter was written three months before the war began, when no one could anticipate what form of government the Southern States would adopt. In reply I would remind you that it was well known for years before that event, that if the slaveocracy would ever put their threats of rebellion in practice, it would be for the strengthening and preserving of the institution of slavery. These men foresaw, no false prophets either, that no guarantee which the United States government or constitution would give, could withstand the change of sentiment against it that was discovering itself everywhere, as its horrid cruelty and dreadful injustice were becoming better known; and as the people began to have a better knowledge of the duty they owed to each other they saw it must be taken under their own protection, and their form of government founded upon its righteousness, otherwise they knew it must be overthrown. With these facts before you I think your ignorance of what form of government the rebels would adopt is very inexcusable, and when you would attempt to defend as right and just the foundation of the rebel government, you are not only a sympathizer with the rebellion but a rebel at heart, though you may not see it; for a man that cannot see coming events three months ahead cannot be expected to see much. "No one could anticipate what form of government the Southern States would adopt." Why do you charge others with your ignorance? You are guilty, Sir, of an unjust accusation, with which you accuse Bishop Potter. Besides, I think your views in support of man-stealing are not only unworthy of a servant of Jesus Christ, but unworthy of even a *citizen of the world,* perhaps not of your *American citizen.* Again, you seem to take credit to yourself by admitting the right of Abolition. Now, Sir, let me tell you that Abolitionists are not to be blarneyed by such as you. If slavery be a Bible institution, which you labour to show, we know that Bible institutions are given to be fulfilled, not abolished: this much, a Bishop at least ought to know. The Sabbath is also a Bible institution, and I suppose, if it suited your interest or your prejudice, you would abolish it also; nevertheless, Sir, slavery will be abolished, not by Abolitionists, but by itself: it will work its own cure, like every other system of iniquity, filling up its own cup of indignation un-

til in its madness it runs over. Slavery has taken up the sword, and I have full faith that it will perish by the sword. You say that in the relation of master and slave there was *necessarily no sin.* I leave this expression undiscussed until you avow yourself a Papist. I have no intention of entering the intricate mazes of Popish casuistry. If Bishop Potter's conduct respecting the evil of slavery, according to your showing, be true, it has not been what I could wish. I suppose Bishop Potter is not much better or worse than most other men. It has been too much the habit of men in every walk of life, ministers of the Gospel not excepted, to remain sinfully silent while the poor, the weak, and the defenceless were suffering the evil effects of slavery. This was neither manly nor generous, not to speak of its unworthiness of Christianity or brotherly love. But the evil of slavery has now come home and laid its iron grasp on the strong as well as the weak, forcing them now to the other side at this, the eleventh hour. They must not think too hard of us if we say they are only consulting their own interest; still it is a good sign to see so many range themselves on the side of the Lord against the mighty, be their motives what they may. Besides, I have a respect for the men who turn from their wickedness, as I pity those who have gray hairs upon them, but know it not. I cannot pass from this subject without expressing my admiration of the few, I may say goodly number of ministers of the Gospel, who have boldly stood up in defence of human rights, and who have not been afraid to lift up their voices against sin in high places. Coming generations will not be unmindful of their faithfulness. They shall and will have their reward.

The doctrine of the universal church, which was unanimously in favour of slavery for eighteen centuries, you think, is a conclusive argument in favour of its lawfulness. Do you mean to insinuate that there is nothing sinful except the church has defined it to be such? You cannot palm such Popish nonsense on a Protestant community. If you have been kissing the Scarlet Strumpet, which I much fear you have, you ought to use a little discretion, and do it in the dark. I see you intend to inflict another of your books upon society, in which you intend to produce your proofs for the truth whereon you stand. I think it will take you to be very busy writing, as the time is short, not your time, (which

I hope may be lengthened a century,) but the time for the existence of this evil is fast passing away, and if you expect to reap a harvest of glory by being its last champion, improve well your time. Yes, Sir, I would advise you to write, write, write. When you thrust your productions before the public you do not know the amount of injury you are doing the system which you wish to perpetuate. I would have you not to be too sanguine of the success of your book, though you advertise it beforehand. I fear it will not meet with much success, as many of the class for whom you write cannot read, and a great many of them have no inclination to read your book, or any other; and your success, I fear, will not equal that of Uncle Tom's Cabin or Kemble's Journal, and that will be a pity, seeing it is a Bishop that is father to the *bantling.*

Sir, I have encouraged you to write; I can further inform you of the existence of a large class of men who endorse your views. I am also able to show you by practical personal observation that what I assert is true. If you come on here, we will test it by visiting all the purlieus of vice in this city, and you will find that ninety-nine out of every hundred of those who are found in such places are stanch supporters of this *"truth whereon you stand;"* that the harder the swearer, the more irreverent the blasphemer, the greater the scoundrel, the more complete the ruffian, the stronger will he assert the "truth whereon you stand." And then, if you please, we will visit the other and more respectable walks of life, and you will find that a very large majority of the ignorant, the uneducated, the unscrupulous, the selfish, and unprincipled, are disciples of yours, and I believe I am not uncharitable when I say—like cause like people. Sir, we have much cause for thankfulness that we are able to proclaim that this great Babylon of Iniquity is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Therefore, we would advise this nation which this great Babylon hath so long lured on with her sorceries, to reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works, in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. But in justice to the fore-mentioned class of men I must not omit to mention, that as a general thing they sympathize with the oppressed, while your only sympathy is with the oppressor, and there is still some need for your book to corrupt them more.

You speak so glibly about your church and her Apostolic claims, which means, I suppose, her Apostolic succession, that it looks as if John W. Hopkins, Bishop of Vermont, the champion of the lawfulness of oppression, and robbery, and wrong, would claim the legitimate succession, the only true descent of that gentleman, who centuries ago, wrote that little letter, so full of Christian love and sympathy, and tenderness, to Philemon by Onesimus, his returned servant, not to treat him as a servant, but a brother beloved in the Lord. We happen to know something of the mind of Paul, and we are perfectly sure that he would spurn such a relationship, even though a mitre was fixed to the head of his pretended relation. I have noticed that you charge the church with admitting the right of slavery for eighteen centuries; but whether by the authority of the church or of the synagogue of Satan, you do not state. I am not inclined to turn over church history to see if this be a fact, which I much doubt. Your assertion is not sufficient proof without your authorities; but if such be the fact, it does not follow that slavery is right, but goes to prove how very corrupt the church, which claims to be Christ's church, has been in every age; neither can it be true of the synagogue of Satan: he is represented as a Prince, and as such could not stoop to the meanness to head a slavery-defending church, but has left it out to be neither hot nor cold—the production of the meanness, the cruelty, the selfishness of our own corrupt nature—a church that has no resting place for the sole of her foot in any civilized country except in these United States, where she is fast filling up her cup of iniquity, and is going out in darkness and confusion of face. "I shall prove from that book, by the most unquestionable authorities, that slaveholders were in the church from the beginning." But does this prove, Sir, that slavery was right, or is right? A mere boy ought to be ashamed of such logic. Again, the Bishop says, "that slavery was held to be consistent with Christian principle by the Fathers and Councils, and by Protestant Divines and Commentators up to the very close of the last century, and that this fact was universal among all Churches." Now, Sir, allow me to ask you if this be all the proof that you intend to bring forward in your book—that slavery, the sum of all villanies, is right because it was so from the beginning, because Fathers and Councils said so,

and because Protestant Commentators, out of their own corrupt imaginations, made their Bible not the Bible say so. I believe your book will be only for two classes of your disciples, namely, those who will not read it, and those who cannot read it. Any man, Sir, of common sense will see that your authorities are no proofs at all. Because a thing was held and practised in the dark ages, does that make it right now? Have not unreasonable prejudice, and blind ignorance been in the church since the beginning? Then, according to your mode of reasoning, they should be held and practised by us. Has not Anti-Christ been in the church since the beginning, and is not Anti-Christ as old as the devil, and if being in the church sanctifies the error, as you would have us to believe, therefore Anti-Christ ought now to be Christianity, and Satan a saint. Because the rulers of the church have erred, should their doings be laid to the charge of the whole church? No, Sir, we of the nineteenth century are beginning to see that the rulers of the church do not constitute the church, for if it did it would be often anything sometimes but the church of Christ.

We believe, Sir, that the church, even in her darkest days, has had a witnessing people, who, through their unfaithfulness may not have raised a testimony against oppression; have nevertheless not bowed the knee to Baal; and if you have no stronger proofs of the righteousness of slavery than what you promise in your forthcoming book, it is the more ridiculous, and you fail of your object. "When we lift our voice or pen in defence of iniquity, we are Anti-Christ." This proposition seems strange; nevertheless it is true. Further, no man can defend slavery as right without being a Papist for the time being; and I do not think it strange if Bishop Hopkins be no exception to the rule. I accuse Bishop Hopkins of teaching and defending Anti-Christ in his defence of slavery, and as the most devout worshipper of the Beast. I accuse him of being guilty of opposing Christ, making the command of Christ—"that ye ought to love one another as I have loved you," of no avail. I accuse him of the most irreverent blasphemy, when he would dare to attempt to make the just and merciful God the author of the institution of slavery. Let any man, if he possesses anything like a correct knowledge of what Christianity is, examine the volumes of published sermons that have been preached to the slaves; then let

him examine a number of discourses delivered to their hearers by the ministers of the church of Rome, and he cannot but see that Christ as Christ is entirely excluded, that heaven is held out to the slaves as the reward of obedience to their masters; and the other, obedience to the church. Such teachings are decidedly Anti-Christ; they bear the impress of the image of the Beast, and it matters little whether he show the likeness of a leopard, or the feet of a Bear. We believe that salvation is not influenced in any way, not even by the most perfect obedience to the law, whether it be human or divine; that salvation wholly, entirely, and completely belongs to Christ, that the performance of any duty, whether to God or man, in order to obtain salvation, is one of the heads of Blasphemy which the Beast has kept so prominently before the Christian world, the plausibility of which has deceived, if it were possible, the very elect. If the sermons which I have seen be a fair specimen of what has been preached to the slaves, then Christ has not been preached to the people, but the doctrine of Devils, which is Anti-Christ. To preach Christ is to make the people free: to preach Christ is to preach abolitionism—to break the yoke of the oppressed, and let the prisoner go free. True Christianity is founded on love—God is love—He is no respecter of persons, and the love of Christ in his people levels all distinctions fostered by pride, and makes them all one in Him. Christ has been the only great Abolitionist that has ever appeared; and love for the brethren has been the axe that He has laid at the root of the tree of oppression; and as sure as God's promise is true, so sure will the tree fall upon the oppressor and grind him to powder.

Now, Sir, we must plead guilty to the crime, if crime it be, of not believing in the infallibility of great men, not even fathers in the Church; neither do we receive the decisions of Councils or Churches as infallible, but we prefer to try all things for ourselves by the Word and testimony of the Spirit. Therefore, if we were determined to build another house, we would as soon build it on John Hopkins, Bishop of Vermont, rotten and all as we believe the foundation would be, as upon any of the fathers or Councils of the past or present age. Sir, it is this trusting in Egypt, it is this leaning on an arm of flesh, that has wrought such mischief in the church now, as it did in the days of Hosea, when he wrote

by the Spirit, "Ye have ploughed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity, ye have eaten the fruit of lies, because thou didst trust in thy ways, in the multitude of thy mighty men." When you speak of Councils and Fathers in connexion, it appears to us you intend to shelter yourself and your pet iniquity under the skirts of the great Whore; but we would advise you that her skirts have become so much extended by reason of so many Protestant Divines seeking shelter under them that there is hardly any more room: besides, her skirts have become so thin that even the dull eyes of laymen can see plainly through them. We believe such hiding places are anything but creditable to a Protestant Bishop, who claims the only right of descent from the Apostles.

You say, "The nineteenth century is a century of vast improvements," &c. This is an excellent acknowledgment coming from *you*, and let me also add that while everything else has been moving and improving, your church, (I mean the slavery-defending church,) has been standing still. To this you assent. Is it any wonder, then, Sir, that she is stinking in the land? You talk so complacently of your church and her claims to infallibility that one would think she was to go down to all succeeding ages as a model for Christianity, past, present, and to come. But, Sir, we cannot join with you in your gratulations, because we are sure that your Liturgy, with its popish likeness and its ceremonial nonsense, is not able to contend with Him who has said, "Behold I make all things new;" neither is our own Confession of Faith what it ought to be. We believe that it is indebted too much to Rome for many of its doctrines, and I hope the time is not far distant when our church will feel the necessity of a more enlightened knowledge of Christ through the operation of the Spirit, and of a closer fellowship with the spiritual truths of the Bible. I hope intelligent Protestants will understand me when I say that I am not a believer in the infallibility of our Protestantism. We believe the dividing line between Popery and Protestantism is neither so well defined nor so broad as it ought to be. Nay, not a line, but a gulf, which the church of Christ ought to keep continually widening, and widening, and widening, until the church of Christ will be as far separated from Anti-Christ as heaven from hell, then, and not till then, will our church be, what she ought, and what we have hopes

she will be—a *Protesting* Church; but this cannot be accomplished through conventions of men, nor through the dead letter of forms of faith, but only by the work of the Spirit, not with the Church. but in the Church individually—making known the sufficiency, the glory, and the excellence of Christ, and when this is done, as it certainly will be, then will the Church be satisfied with Christ, This shall be the forerunner of the descent of the Holy Jerusalem from God out of heaven, having God's glory, the glory of which the inspired Apostle was able only to allegorize the result of. "There shall be no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it." "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof." "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the Kings of the earth do bring their glory into it."

But in religious truth, or reverence for the Bible, the age in which we live is prolific in daring and impious innovations. True, Sir, for you; I grant you this; and no person is more chargeable with innovations than John W. Hopkins, Bishop of Vermont,—who would dare to charge the Almighty with instituting one of the meanest, most wicked and cruel aristocracies that has ever been invented by the pride or folly of our race. Is it any wonder then that the Bible would be seemingly losing its power, when men who ought to be its champions in defence of its purity, and of the superior morality it contains, are to be found measuring its standard of morality by the morality of the off-scouring of the earth, moving, as it were, heaven and earth, in your endeavours to lay to the Bible the barbarism of the past and the present age? But, Sir, the Bible spurns such attempts. You cannot hide the cloven foot even from the gaze of the community. Then, in the face of all this, you would set yourself up as a censor against the errors of Universalism, Millerism, Pantheism, Mormonism, Spiritualism, and while lamenting the spread of these errors would set yourself up as the defender—the champion—the propagator of an iniquity, the wickedness of which cannot be equalled. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

We have heard the increased clamour against the Bible, &c. Do not make yourself uneasy about that, Sir. The Bible is not

to be put down by any such clamour, no matter whether it come from mistaken Geology, or the more dastardly attacks of the Pro-Slavery apologists. Geology properly investigated and understood acknowledges the Bible to be true. But Pro-Slavery apologists can only see in the Bible robbery, oppression, and wrong. But this cannot injure the purity of the Bible. Sir, the attempt of Pro-slaveryism to fasten upon the Bible the crime of instituting slavery, reminds me of the folly of the fool who attempted to soil the sunlight by throwing mud upon it, but to his astonishment the sunlight came uppermost, as bright and clear as before. So shall it be with Bible slavery propagators: the more filth, mud, and dirt they heap upon the Bible, it will come out so much the more clear, while they will become so much the more filthy. Whatever injury pro-slaveryism has done was committed against itself, for its tongue has set it on fire, the fire of hell, and though its disciples did all in their power to quench the flame in the last election, it cannot be quenched now by any human means until it devours the adversary. This, Sir, is the reward of pro-slaveryism—sowing the wind, it is now reaping the whirlwind. Sir, it is this iniquity for which you are contending, this wickedness which the nation has so long nursed and protected, that has now been the cause of her having to pass through the RED sea; the cries, the tears, and the sufferings which she has endured, and which she must yet endure, has no parallel, not even in the closing of the Red Sea over the slave-catchers of old. So it has been, so it is, and so it will be with every nation that shuts its ears against the cries of the oppressed. We have marvelled at the senatorial eloquence which proclaimed that it was high time to have an anti-slavery God, and an anti-slavery Bible. But, Sir, we have had that always. God has proclaimed himself to be "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious." That, Sir, is anti-slavery of the most radical description; and throughout the whole Bible He has threatened the oppressor with the most severe judgments, and He has never failed to inflict it, as He is now doing on the unrepentant; and I defy you to show me in the Bible where he has characterized himself as a pro-slavery God; and though you are a Bishop, it is impossible for you to remodel Jehovah after your own image.

We have the most positive evidence that the Bible is anti-

slavery from these words: "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets." Under the observance of this rule it is utterly impossible that slavery could exist; and Christ intimates that it is not a new rule of life, but that it has been the law enforced by the prophets from the beginning. It is thus, Sir, that Christ gives you the lie that slavery is a Bible institution. The attempt to fasten upon the Bible the crime of instituting slavery is the most impudent on record. Slavery cannot be defended as right and just except through lying, and it is curious to find that the defenders of slavery from the Bible have taken him for their model who has said: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" This style of lying has become too stale to deceive any except those who desire to enter in and support the kingdom of lies. In lamenting over the spread of error and erroneous sects, you seem to forget that in that iniquitous system which you advocate is to be found the roots of the errors which you deprecate, namely—ignorance, pride, superstition, lust of power, adultery, and fornication. How much more sinful, think you, is it for Mormonism to keep concubines than pro-slaveryism? And, the pro-slavery Gospel that is preached to the American slave makes the gaining of heaven the result of good works—is Universalism of the worst description; and Pantheism, is it not most rampant under the system of lies—this is its home; and what shall we say of Millerism—that it is error, but no greater than what the Episcopal or the Presbyterian, or any other church holds on the subject. We believe that the church's views concerning the coming of Christ are too carnal; that he does not or will not come robed in created glory, or in material paraphernalia—but that he does and will come according to the promise, "Behold I come as a thief," and this coming must be spiritually discerned before we know its meaning. To us it does seem strange that the church, with the example of the Old Testament church before her, should stumble over the same stumbling-stone concerning the coming of Christ. When will the church learn that it is vanity and vexation of spirit to be thrusting flesh and blood into the kingdom of heaven, but when the followers of Christ come to have clearer views concerning his character, taught them by his own Spirit, they will then be ena-

bled to estimate more correctly wherein consists his true glory and his great power, when he comes the second time without sin unto salvation. "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments clean, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

"We have heard the Constitution of our country denounced as a covenant with death and hell." Sir, you have made a charge against us which you ought to know is false. We have made no such charge against the Constitution, but against that wickedness in the Constitution which gives the strong the power to rob the weak, and that it has been a covenant with death any ordinary man may see the truth of. That it has been a covenant with hell I am not so sure. I have asserted that slavery or the institution of slavery has been too mean even for Satan. I say so still, but I believe that the Constitution in establishing and protecting slavery has been a covenant with Mr. Pride and Mrs. Lazy, and that the country is now reaping the bitter fruits of such a wicked covenant. "We have heard the boasted determination that the Union shall never be restored until its provisions for the protection of slavery are utterly abolished." Yes, Sir, allow me to congratulate you that you have spoken the truth concerning us; that is just the determination of the right-thinking men of the nation. I do hope that Abolitionists will take no rest day nor night until this great wickedness shall be torn from the Constitution and trampled under foot. Has it really come so low with the church that one of her rulers is found lamenting the abolishment of a system of robbery and wrong out of the Constitution of his country? "How is the most fine gold become dim!" "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Sir, the nation is determined to shake off the viper of slavery which the framers of the Constitution fastened on their hands into the fire of its own kindling, and though it may grieve you, your grief does not amount to much compared with the great and real good to be accomplished; nevertheless, for your comfort I would state that yours is not an isolated case. It is not the first time, nor will it be the last, that kings of the earth will be found lamenting and bewailing when they see the smoke of their iniquitous systems ascending up forever and ever; "For strong is the

Lord God who judgeth her." Sir, I have great hopes of the honesty and honour of the American people. I am sure that they have made their last compromise with slavery. I hope that before Mr. Lincoln's term expires he will see the necessity of issuing a Proclamation of Universal Emancipation; not under the cowardly plea of military necessity, but that he will see that his position calls upon him to go before the people in doing what is right and just; that he will see that his proper position is a ruler of the people and not their servant; that he will be enabled to see that in doing so he is not transgressing republicanism, which is not a form, but a principle, founded on love, truth, judgment, and mercy: if he can see thus, and act accordingly, I make no hesitation in predicting that the name of ABRAHAM LINCOLN will be valued and honoured even with that of George Washington.

Notwithstanding, we admit Mr. Lincoln certainly would not have been our choice for President, but we confess that we have been agreeably disappointed in the man; and though we believe his policy is not what it ought to have been, and though his mistaken clemency has been the cause of much suffering to the nation, and perhaps to himself; we believe the nation had sinned, and had to be punished for its pride and oppression; yet Americans have good reason to be proud of their President—as a man of integrity, a man that has acted up to the light that was in him, for since the days of George Washington no man has filled the Presidential Chair with so much credit to himself, and so honourably to the nation. I would congratulate Americans on the good effect of the war, both upon the people and the country: one of the good effects of it is the drawing out by the roots the pulling, wiry, compromising spirit that had taken such tremendous hold on the people. It has shown them the necessity of meeting their difficulties by showing mercy, and not by compromises. We have good reason for believing that burning a little gunpowder occasionally is not the greatest evil that can befall a nation. We do desire very much the prosperity of America, and the progress of the American people to the perfecting of a republican government. They may make blunders; this is to be expected; yet of all nations of the earth I have most hopes of America. Still I cannot but express my conviction that heretofore they have not been a republican government, but a

despotism of the very worst description—one that has not only trampled upon the rights of their own poor, but has denied their nationality, thus adding insult to injury; enslaving both body and mind. Ten years ago, when I landed in this country, the nation styled their poor—niggers; then there followed a little improvement, and the nation called them negroes; now the nation writes them coloured people; and I make no hesitation in asserting that in a very short time the nation will write them by their proper appellation—Coloured American Citizens. It is very curious to observe what a different position despotism occupies in this country from that of Europe. There it chooses the ruler, here the people. And it has succeeded so wonderfully under the pleasing name of republicanism that it will be the more difficult to drive it out. In Europe the despots tyrannize over the people; here the people trample upon their ruler by denying him the right to rule; speaking of him publicly as their servant. But we know that no man can serve two masters, how much less two million masters? he cannot be their servant, but their slave. When the ruler of a nation is clothed with powers which he ought not to possess, he will certainly in a greater or less degree exercise those powers to the hurt of the governed, or those whom he has in his power; or if the people take those powers to themselves, to which they have no right, they will certainly rule despotically those whom they may have in their power; and of all despots save me from the despotism of the people; therefore we assert that universal franchise is despotic, and will certainly work mischief in the end to any government.

When we look at the men under whose guardianship the Constitution took its present form, we could not possibly expect much, as the majority of them were not qualified to institute a republican government. Good men undoubtedly were to be found among them as any age of the world has produced, but unfortunately for the nation they were in the minority. We are not speaking of the form, but the principle on which just governments should be founded, viz.:—Good will toward men. We confess that when we took up the American Constitution, to study it for ourselves, we were grievously disappointed, the more so from hearing such a good report of it—we found that it contained and provided for the oppression and the robbery of their own poor, and not only this, but provided for

the protection and the well-being of the oppressor; therefore we cast it from us as utterly unworthy of the sworn allegiance of any intelligent, consistent man. Yet we feel sure that Americans will remodel their Constitution and cast out this great wickedness, as they ought to see by this time that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." I hope they will also see in the future the danger of offending these little ones, especially if they are Christ's little ones; that these offences are more dangerous to the stability and well-being of the nation than an army of one hundred thousand rebels, for we thereby provoke the displeasure of the Most High. I also hope that when the Constitution is remodelled they will see the danger of founding a republic upon sovereignties. We hope for the future they will see the inconsistency of admitting sovereignties into a government, for wherever they are found they will certainly rule, if not by right, they will by might. We hope the nations will bear in mind how that popular sovereignty and state sovereignty usurped the national power, and what they could not usurp they twisted it so much out of shape as that it lost its power: then they set up and moulded three images of the nation in clay—Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan; but instead of falling down to worship the images which they had set up, they caused the images to fall down and worship them. Then, under such favourable circumstances, was openly fomented and warmed into living life, until it boiled over, the hell broth of American Treason—a treason the most damnable, mean, wicked, contemptible, lying treason, that ever cursed a nation; and I accuse John Hopkins of Vermont of throwing in his *little* influence in behalf of such treason.

Such was the position of the Government when the people called Mr. Lincoln to be their servant, and though he promised obedience to his sovereigns at first, the nation has great cause for thankfulness now, that he was not an image of clay like his predecessors, but of brass and iron. We are happy to be able to say that he has found out that if the nation is to be preserved he must rule—not serve; and we hope he will see the necessity of ruling the nation for the time being with a rod of iron. This is Heaven's plan of ruling a perverse nation, and we believe in it. The wicked in every nation ought to be ruled with a rod of iron, and the good are a law to themselves. But we believe that although Mr. Lincoln has thus far ruled with a feeble hand, he comprehends the

need of holding the nation firmly in his hand. We give him credit for much foresight, and we believe, if his depth of thought equalled his comprehensiveness, he would be not only the wisest, but the best statesman that America ever produced. We do not expect much of the present legislators—like the people like the priest. The people must be prepared for a republican government founded on Christian charity and love. The people and the States must lay down their sovereignties. There must be only one sovereign —the National Government. The people must submit to be ruled, not rule; as their ruling heretofore has not been for good, but for evil.

We further assert that nine out of every ten emigrants who land in this country are not eligible to a vote under a republican government, and it seems to me the longer they reside here they are the more unworthy, and none more so than my own unfortunate countrymen, whose national character formerly was unselfish, taking side with the weak against the strong, and glorying in it; but now, Sir, they have become Americanized, after your image, and none are to be found so forward as they to plant their feet upon the neck of their weaker brethren who have fallen among thieves; and all this corruption and wickedness comes of their believing in "this truth whereon you stand," and if their believing in this truth has made me ashamed of my countrymen, is it anything strange that I should be exceedingly mad and bitter against it. Sir, it is this spurious Americanism which they have learned from such as you that has sent them to the polls ten times more the child of hell by their becoming Americanized. And this is equally true of native-born Americans. If they had anything like a correct view of their duty as citizens, party would not rule them as despotically as it does. Therefore, we assert that there is a large class of persons in this country, as well as in every other, to whom the franchise is a great injury, and is in a greater degree injurious to the Government under which they enjoy the privilege.

In re-modeling their Constitution we would humbly suggest to Americans not to receive any written form of human laws, no matter how wisely made, or how carefully guarded, as an infallable rule. For the future we believe the nation's wisest course would be to leave every human enactment open to repeal or revi-

sion. We think it is self-evident, at least it ought to be, to every reflecting mind, that nations are progressing in the knowledge of what their duty is to each other, and to themselves; that nations as well as individuals are beginning to see that their wisest and safest course for the future, is to subscribe and carry into practical effect, the truth of that good old rule, delivered of old: "To do justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God." And while this knowledge is only in its infancy, the nation will act the wisest that does not hinder by fallible human enactments the progression of this knowledge to a higher and higher perfection. In future they should not be satisfied with the form, they should not be clinging to the letter which killeth, but should keep their eyes firmly fixed on the true spirit of republicanism, which is—peace on earth and good will toward men. The nation must become Christianized, not after the sect of the Pharisees or the Sadducees, nor after the fashion of the brotherhood of Masons or Odd Fellows, or any other Fellows, but when the nation individually exhibits so much of the spirit of Christ, as to be able to deny themselves, as no other system of morals or manners, no other policy however plausible, except genuine Christianity, will enable a nation to overcome its selfishness. It is genuine Christianity that will enable the people not to look upon their own, but every man on the things of his neighbour: then, and not till then, will the nation enjoy a perfectly republican Government.

Speaking of your ordainer, you say: "I believe as he believed, that the plain precepts and practices of the Apostles sanctioned the institution." Sir, your ordainer and you have believed a lie concerning the Apostles, and we are thankful that both their precepts and practices contradict your statement. A man who is worthy of the name will not sanction anything unless his judgment recommends it to be right, just and true, and we are perfectly sure the Apostles would not sanction such a wicked institution, and your attempt, and that of your ordainer, to slander the Apostles, meets with our strongest condemnation. You conclude your letter spreading your virtues before your readers—"That you observe the feasts and the fasts, the new moons and the holidays, pay tithes of all that you possess, and are not as other Publicans." Therefore I take leave of you, as such puffing is beneath criticism.

Yours truly, JOHN MCLAUGHLIN.

Philadelphia, January 4, 1864.

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